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DCI Regional Meeting -- 16 October 1985

1. Europe and the Gorbachev Meeting

The disclosure of the Soviet proposal in Geneva and Gorbachev's amplification of it in Paris have not found much positive echo in Europe so far. But they have introduced more fluidity into the situation and the Soviets could eventually draw some benefits from the new situation they have created:

- The Soviet proposal is so blatantly one-side and aimed at decoupling Europe from the US that it is hard to believe it will not be followed by another offer that will seem more attractive, if only in comparison with the opening gambit.
- As bad as it is, that opening gambit is nevertheless creating some pressure in Europe for a counterproposal, particularly among opposition parties but also within governments.

On the positive side, the results of the election in Belgium will mean the continuation in office of a staunchly pro-US coalition. This development could marginally affect Holland's 1 November decision. But the Belgians were irritated by their original exclusion from pre-Summit planning and will now be more insistent on an active role for themselves and NATO on a whole.

The playing out of these various tendencies will not be determined solely by Soviet actions and European domestic political pulls. It will also be a function of how Europeans perceive the US to be taking their views into account:

- Substantively, on such issues as US handling of the Soviet proposal, SDI, and the clarification of the ABM treaty
- And procedurally on how the US deals with the advice these Europeans will be giving us between now and the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting. For instance, if they see the 24 October "Economic Summit 7-1" luncheon and the NAC consultations as pro-forma presentations of final decisions, they will probably react negatively, thereby creating greater Soviet public diplomacy opportunities.

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